

abandon himself to blind panic. Such a moment of
 blind panic
 was precipitated when the first Labour Government
 took office,
 Was it reasonable to suppose that now the
 representatives of the
 many, who worked so hard for so small a reward
 had come to
 power, they would refrain from spoiling the few
 who got so
 much without working at all ? Yet all that
 happened was that
 a respectable Scotsman with an irregular
 moustache, a rich
 quavering voice and a gift for meandering
 oratory, became
 Prime Minister. What a relief it was, like hearing
 sounds down-
 stairs which suggest a burglar and finding on
 investigation that
 it is only a policeman making sure no windows **or**
 doors have
 been left open by mistake.⁵ If this was all the
 Labour Party
 amounted to—MacDonald—the fears it had given
 rise to were
 quite groundless. There was really nothing to
 worry about. By
 the time the second Labour Government was
 formed, its in-
 nocuousness had come to be so taken for granted
 that few even
 bothered to transfer money abroad—that earliest of
 all symptoms
 of unease among the wealthy.

Tins was the shepherd, what of the sheep ?
 They were a
 mixed lot, representing a great variety of interests
 aucl discon-
 tents, many in the House of Commons for the first
 time after a
 long life spent campaigning, always before in
 opposition and
 somewhat" disconcerted to find themselves in the
 position of
 having to justify what had been done and excuse
 what had been
 left undone instead of the other way round. The
 most solid
 element among them was the trade unionists,
 many of them
 ex-checkweighmen, little given to joining in
 debates, sure of

⁶ An example of the soothing effect MacDonald had on those troubled by great possessions is given in Lord Elton's biography. In 1924 MacDonald went to stay at Bishopsthorpe, York, with Dr. Lang, then Archbishop of York, Dr. Lang 'put a question to him "as a good Socialist"—"Ought I to live in a house like this?" ' and went on to explain that the alternative would be, not living in a slum, but *to take a suburban villa outside the town and identify- myself with die bourgeoisie.' MacDonald thought for a little while, and then said: *You are right. This is worth preserving* You should live here.¹ Needless to say, he did, until another alternative than a suburban villa presented itself, and he moved to Lambeth Palace.